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Christmas in a COVID World: Online Shopping Accelerates

CEDARVILLE, OHIO -- Rather than damaging the holiday shopping industry, retailers are using COVID-19 as a way to highlight online shopping as the future of retail.

"The trend toward online shopping was going to continue growing regardless of outside income effects," said Dr. Jeff Haymond, professor of economics and the dean of the school of business administration at Cedarville University. "But with COVID, it's more advantageous than ever to shop online."

However, the projected increase in online shopping will likely be fettered by reduced spending.

Even with more people returning to work and a stable stock market, many Americans are still out of jobs and have struggled financially because of COVID-related issues, leaving families with less income to spend on Black Friday purchases and Christmas gifts.

"I suspect that the increased online requirements of a COVID world coupled with trends toward online shopping will produce a net gain over what sales would have been last year, but reduced from what it could be if people had the same income," said Haymond.

In order to appeal to customers, businesses are creatively adapting to a marketplace shaped by COVID.

"This virus has put many businesses at risk of bankruptcy, and nothing gets you focused like going bankrupt," said Haymond. "Business owners are working hard and deserve our prayers."

Pickup services, serving customers online and providing a virtual component to company activities are common changes businesses have engaged to meet business demands during a pandemic.

While creative adaptations and convenient online storefronts have provided customers with access to goods and services, Haymond thinks people will want to get their lives back to something akin to the Christmases they've known in the past.

"If people have income, my suspicion is that they're going to want to make this Christmas as normal as possible," said Haymond. "They'll feel better about life in general if they have a normal holiday."

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 4,550 undergraduate, graduate and online students in more than 150 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, including the [Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science in Economics](#) program, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science

offerings and high student engagement ranking. For more information about the University, visit www.cedarville.edu.

Written by Tessa Landrum